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Day Camp Manual



Ministry of
Tourism and
Recreation



AUG 1 1994

Staff

Published by the Ministry of
Tourism and Recreation Printed by
the Queen's Printer for Ontario
Province of Ontario
Toronto, Canada.

1983 Government of Ontario

Copies available at \$1.50 from the
Ontario Government Bookstore,
880 Bay Street, Toronto for
personal shopping. Out-of-town
customers write to Publications
Services Section, 5th Floor, 880
Bay Street, Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1N8. Telephone 965-0615.
Toll free long distance 1-800-268-
7540; in Northwestern Ontario 0-
Zenith 67200.

ACKNOWLEDGE- MENTS

The Day Camp Manual, as originally developed by a committee of the Ontario Camping Association, has served the camping community well. In order to continue to be a valuable resource, however, a publication must remain current. Discussions with Dorothy Walter of the Camping and Outdoor Education Services, Ministry of Tourism and Recreation, led to the decision that this publication needed to be revised.

As the initial contributor to the original manual, I know the task of revising the four sections has been an onerous one. I am pleased to have had an active group of contributors representing the Day Camp Committee of the Ontario Camping Association to review materials, share their knowledge and make major contributions to the content.

The group included:

Larry Bell, Camp Robin Hood, Chairman, Day Camp Committee
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John Turner, Camp Richildaca.

All gave generously of their time and energy. I am grateful for their assistance in the developing of these revised manuals.

Bill Babcock
Camp Richildaca

TITLES IN THE DAY CAMP SERIES

1. Administration
2. Staff
3. Campers
4. Programs

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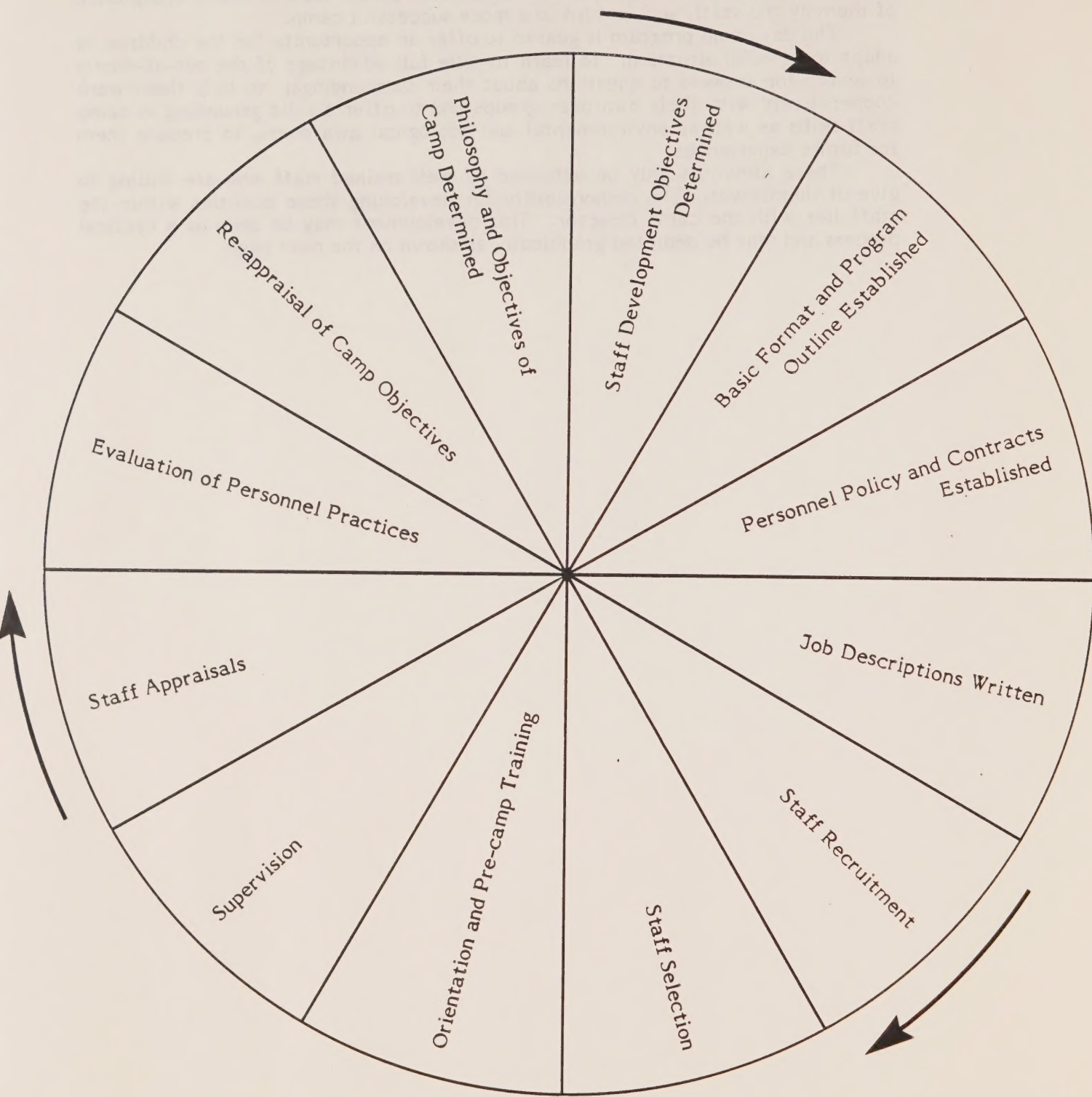
INTRODUCTION

The success of any camp depends on the ability of the staff to use facilities, equipment, and organization effectively. The director and/or Agency where applicable establishes the philosophy and the rules and regulations under which the staff will carry out their task. Capable, enthusiastic and willing staff members allow the child to have a full camp experience. Involving the staff in the process of establishing rules and regulations should lead to ready acceptance of them by the staff, and, in turn to a more successful camp.

The day camp program is geared to offer an opportunity for the children to adapt to a social situation; to learn to take full advantage of the out-of-doors; to search for answers to questions about their surroundings; to help them work cooperatively with their own peer groups and to offer a solid grounding in camp craft skills as well as environmental and ecological awareness, to prepare them for future experiences.

These aims can only be achieved by well trained staff who are willing to give of themselves. The responsibility for developing these qualities within the staff lies with the camp director. This development may be seen as a cyclical process and may be depicted graphically as shown on the next page.

Cycle of Camp Development



RECRUITMENT

Staff recruitment begins before the preceding summer has ended. It is important for a camp to have a solid nucleus of returning personnel to keep the camp functioning efficiently. They know the basic organization and philosophy of the camp and can provide a certain element of continuity, while at the same time experiment to improve the program. The returning staff also serve to give the parents of the campers more confidence in the camp and its policies.

Recruitment depends on two factors:

Budget

It is generally agreed that a substantial budget will allow the hiring of more qualified and mature personnel. In the case of public supported organizations, volunteers may be required. Individuals who are willing to give freely of themselves often make excellent staff members.

Organization

This will determine the total number of staff required, the number of administrative and specialty staff required, and the ratio of staff to campers.

The process of recruitment for new personnel should begin as soon as plans for the coming season have been completed. The experienced director will tell you that it is desirable to have mature staff and that the biggest problem encountered in recruiting is the hiring of male staff over 18 years of age. Some solutions to this problem are:

- better selling of actual role of camp counsellor
- train more male junior staff
- employ university students (male) for longer periods, by involving them in administration and maintenance during pre-season period
- higher salaries
- explore recruitment possibilities where camp is related to courses being studied
- prestige to job
- participate in university or community college co-op program
- make job exciting and provide adequate on-the-job training to make it a valuable personal experience.

SOURCES OF STAFF

Some prospective staff members will apply directly to the camp office without solicitation. With the exception of municipal and agency day camps who receive large numbers of applicants, these will be only a small percentage of the total number required. In order to fill out your staff, every possible source should be explored.

- returning staff
- from your leadership training program. These individuals are an excellent source since they have been trained in the specific philosophy and organization of the day camp in question
- referrals from friends, staff and parents of campers
- organizational camps may draft staff from other departments or branches
- general advertisement in the seasonal or part-time help wanted columns of appropriate publications
- personal contract with the guidance department of schools
- personal contact with college placement services
- Employment Canada Centres
- student employment groups
- Ontario Camping Association's Placement Bureau
- special interest groups such as Audubon Societies, archery clubs, science clubs, may provide counselling or specialty staff
- Girl Guides and Boy Scouts of Canada

- religious affiliations through bulletins and publications
- Sports Leagues which are especially good sources for male staff
- direct solicitation of persons in education and recreation.

SELECTION OF STAFF

The director should have the final word on staff selection. Before beginning the director must establish in his own mind the philosophy under which camp will operate and attempt to state it in writing for referral and, if necessary, change.

Prior to the Interview

It is essential that the director learn as much as possible about the prospective employee and that the employee, in return, learns about the camp and process to be followed in the interview.

The Application Form

The application form should attempt to gather general information about the applicant's qualifications and provide some insight or clues to personality traits. (See the SUGGESTED APPLICATION FORM in the Administration Manual of this series.)

References

Every camp director has a responsibility to check the references of every individual he intends to hire as a member of his staff. References are used to establish the validity of what the applicant states, as they are furnished by people referred to the camp by the applicant. The Ontario Camping Association's code of ethics indicates that it is the director's obligation to check references with the director of the camps previously attended by the applicant as a trainee or staff member. Many directors use the reference as an interview tool, compiling the information in advance.

Of the two types of references, personal discussions or form letters, the former is the most revealing. However, the municipal organization which interviews several hundred applicants and the directors of large camps will find the form letter more practical.

Many organizations request that two written references accompany the application.

When preparing a reference letter, it is important to inform the person providing the reference that his observations of the applicant are crucial, due to the nature of the position for which the applicant is applying, and that his candid opinion will be held in strictest confidence.

Sample forms may be obtained from the Ontario Camping Association office.

Job Description

In many cases this form is mailed to the applicant in advance of the interview or given to him to read as he waits to be interviewed. In all cases, the Job Description should be written. An awareness of the scope of the position for which the applicant is applying will allow for the preparation of necessary questions to be asked during the interview and will allow the director to spend their time together gathering pertinent information about the prospective employee.

Job descriptions may contain information about the following:

- qualifications
- responsibilities of the position
- organization of responsibility (often in chart form)
- available program
- organization of the camp day
- pre-camp training
- regular staff meetings
- salaries
- term of employment.

The following is a sample Job Description used by the Toronto YMCA.

SAMPLE FORM

THE YMCA OF METROPOLITAN TORONTO JOB DESCRIPTION DAY CAMP
COUNSELLOR

Basic Function

The camp counsellor's basic responsibility is the health and safety of each camper assigned to him, and the development of good programs for their camper group.

Term

- A. The day camp week is Monday to Friday, approximately 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
- B. Staff must be available to participate in pre-camp training events, staff meetings, overnights, special events and to ride the camp bus each day.

Qualifications

- A. Minimum age of 17 years as of the start of camp.
- B. Experience in day or resident camping, and/or experience in working with children.
- C. Good health, vitality and enthusiasm for participating in a vigorous camp program.
- D. Ability to work co-operatively and productively with others.

Specific Job Responsibilities

- A. Prepares plans, co-ordinates and conducts camp programs with a camper group of approximately 10 children (divided according to age/sex).
- B. Assists the Section Director and other counsellors to plan and conduct program during Overnights and Special Event Days.
- C. Participates in the Aquatic Program as outlined by the Aquatic Director, and participates in the instruction of campers as required.
- D. Initiates parent contact no later than the week prior to each camp session to introduce themselves and inquire as to any special needs/likes of their campers.
- E. Accepts responsibility assigned by the Bus Driver or Bus Marshall and works to ensure the safety and enjoyment of all campers during bus travel times.
- F. Maintains health and safety standards as outlined by the YMCA of Metropolitan Toronto, both for themselves and their camper groups.
- G. Participates in staff meetings and training events as scheduled.
- H. Accepts responsibility for meeting the day camp bus at the stop assigned to them.
- I. Follows all camp administrative procedures regarding attendance, program, emergency procedures, etc., as outlined during camp training.
- J. Maintains personal behaviour of a responsible and mature nature and abides by all YMCA and Campsite rules and regulations.

Relationship with Senior Staff

- A. The counsellor's primary reporting relationship is with his/her Section Director. Approval for program plans, special activities and advice regarding campers will come largely from the Section Director. The counsellor's performance will also be evaluated both informally and formally by their Section Director, with the knowledge and approval of the Camp Director.
- B. In occasional situations, the counsellor will accept direction from a

Specialty Area staff, Bus Marshall, or other Senior staff member. The Camp Director will always be available to discuss any of the counsellor's working relationships.

Statement of Personnel Policy

To some extent, these statements are repeated in the written contract offered to the successful applicant at the conclusion of negotiations. However, they may also be provided in writing to all returning staff and applicants, prior to the commencement of interviewing and hiring.

The statement of personnel policy is important because:

- it often clears up many questions that will undoubtedly arise during the interview and thus allows the director to concentrate on the applicant's suitability
- the applicant knows the conditions of work and what is expected
- it assures comparable treatment for all staff and thus strengthens staff morale
- it provides the director with guidelines for administrative decisions
- it tells the staff what the camp will do for them.

Although personnel policy necessarily varies from camp to camp, the statement usually includes information about the following:

A copy issued by the YMCA follows.

SAMPLE FORM

YMCA OF METROPOLITAN TORONTO A STATEMENT OF PERSONNEL PRACTICES — FOR DAY CAMP STAFF

Salary

All day camp staff will be paid by cheque and issued bi-weekly according to the schedule distributed to staff prior to camp. Cheques cannot be issued to staff whose documentation is incomplete. Pay cheques should be examined for accuracy upon receipt and cashed promptly.

Income Tax

The law requires that gross pay be shown on each staff person's cheque and T-4 slip. All staff are required to complete a TD1 form at the time of hiring. Tax will not be deducted on cheques of less than \$226.00 gross pay. T-4 slips will be mailed to staff before the end of February.

Canada Pension Plan

Payroll deductions for Canada Pension Plan must be made from each staff person 18 years of age and over who earns in excess of \$61.53 bi-weekly gross pay. The amount deducted is 1.8% of the total wage. This amount may be refundable to you when you file your annual Income Tax form.

Vacation Pay

All staff persons receive vacation pay at 4% of their gross pay in each pay cheque.

Unemployment Insurance

The law requires that a deduction be made for unemployment insurance for those staff persons working more than 30 hours bi-weekly, at a rate of 1.65% of the gross pay.

Workmens' Compensation

All members of the YMCA of Metropolitan Toronto-Central Ontario Lakeshore Y Day Camp staff are covered by the Ontario Worker's Compensation Act. An Accident Report Form must be completed immediately after an injury to a staff person requiring medical attention and forwarded within 12 hours to the Regional Director. An Accident Report Form must be filed with the Workmen's Compensation Board by the YMCA within two days of any accident incurred by a staff member.

Comprehensive Liability Insurance

The YMCA of Metropolitan Toronto-Central Ontario Lakeshore Y Day Camp staff members are included under the Associations' liability insurance coverage against legal actions brought for personal injury or property damage sustained while the Day Camp staff member is in performance of his/her duties.

Ontario Health Insurance

The YMCA is not required to make deductions for health insurance coverage for employees hired for less than three months of work. Since Day Camp staff generally fall within this category, it is expected that all staff persons are protected by either their own, or their family OHIP coverage.

Illness and Emergency Leave

Should a Day Camp staff person become ill or require emergency leave due to personal or family circumstances, the staff person must immediately notify his/her supervisor. A maximum of one half day per camp period on a cumulative basis will be permitted as sick leave without loss of pay.

Health

The YMCA reserves the right to require Day Camp staff to obtain a medical from a physician of the YMCA's choice and at the expense of the YMCA, at any time during the employment period.

Statutory and Association Holidays

Program will operate on statutory and Association holidays which fall on weekdays. The Ontario Employment Standards Act specifies that no statutory holiday pay is required for students employed at a children's camp.

Termination of Agreement

The summer contract for all Day Camp staff may be terminated under any of the following conditions by the Camp Director and upon approval by the Regional Director. The termination procedure specifies that the YMCA will inform the parents of any staff person under 18 years of age of the termination. This practice is followed precisely.

1. **Insufficient Registration** — In the case of a program receiving insufficient participants necessitating a reduction of staff, notice of one week will be given to those staff affected by this reduction. Payment of salary shall be made to the date of determination.
2. **Unsatisfactory Performance** -- Where camp staff has performed his/her duties unsatisfactorily in accordance with the camp appraisal system, termination notice of one week will be given and payment of salary will be made to the date of termination. Unsatisfactory performance will be declared when camp staff fail to perform duties in accordance with the terms and conditions of the "Day Camp Staff Regulations" and the Day Camp Staff Position Description.

3. **Failure to Perform Duties** -- Where a Day Camp staff person does not perform his/her duties as prescribed, or is absent from staff training without permission, continually late for work or absent from work, termination notice of one week will be given and payment of salary will be made to the date of termination.

4. **Gross Misconduct** -- Where the behaviour of a Day Camp staff person seriously jeopardizes the health, reputation, safety or property of the campers or the camp, termination would be immediate and payment made to date. The breaking of camp regulations could also be reason to cause immediate termination.

5. **Termination** -- Day Camp staff finding it necessary to resign shall give a minimum of one week's notice in writing to the Camp Director. Salary will be paid to the last working day.

Procedure for terminating employment under items 1, 2, 3 and 4 will be through consultation with the affected staff person, the immediate supervisor and the Camp Director at the initiation of any party. The termination process may be initiated only after consultation with and approval by the Regional Director.

Grievance Procedures

Any Day Camp staff person who feels that he/she has not received fair treatment in relation to the terms and procedures of the staff agreement or the personnel policies and practices may, after having informed the Camp Director, apply to the Regional Director of the Region that administers the Camp, for a hearing of his/her concern. This procedure may be initiated by a telephone call or a letter to the Regional Director.

Job Application Advice and Hiring Practices

It is important to prepare young people for an interview in order for them to feel at ease and make them fully understand the subtleties of the negotiations which will follow. Applicants may be nervous, unresponsive or blunt and uncommunicative. To ease the situation, to enhance the quality of the interview, and to clarify the procedure of the interview, the following guidelines has been developed.

TO THE APPLICANT Many camps have found it beneficial to present the applicant with the following information as part of a pre-interview package.

How to Apply:

Prior to the interview, make an effort to read any available literature on the camp in question and the complete job description. Make a written list of questions which you would like answered during the interview. Thus, when he time for "any further questions" is offered, you may pursue those that have not already been covered.

- make an application to the camp(s) of your choice
- complete and return the application promptly, make certain that all questions are answered accurately, i.e. age, school, grade, reference, etc.
- an interview will be arranged. It may be necessary to allow sufficient time for references to be received.

The Interview:

At the interview, answer questions frankly and ask questions of your own. This is the time to determine whether this is the camp for you. Understand your specific job responsibilities and duties, as well as financial arrangements, and all camp policies.

Find out those services and/or tangible benefits that the camp will provide as part of the conditions of your employment. Ask to see a copy of camp contract. These understandings will help clarify your relationship with the camp.

Remember that the interview need not be conclusive for either you or the director. Take the time to consider those pertinent details that were discussed during your interview. Do not make a hasty decision. Once your decision has been made to accept the position offered, there should be a written agreement (contract). This agreement should be signed and returned promptly.

It is unethical for you to break your contract in order to apply or negotiate elsewhere. However, if your circumstances have unexpectedly changed since the signing of your contract, in a way that would make it impractical for you to attend camp, then you should, without delay, discuss the situation with your camp director, who will usually offer a solution or release you from your obligation.

Your application for a staff position may be rejected for many reasons, including one or more of: age, school grade, lack of experience, previous performance at another job, references, an unreasonable salary requirement in view of age and/or experience.

THE INTERVIEW

To the Interviewer

The Business Principles of the Ontario Camping Association indicate that references should be received from people who are qualified to judge the applicant's personal integrity, as well as professional ability. If the applicant has been associated with another camp member of the O.C.A., you are advised to obtain a written or verbal reference from that camp. It is also expected that a written application will have been received from the applicant, either in a letter or on a job application form provided by the camp.

When the necessary background information has been gathered, an appointment should be made for an interview.

The Interview

The purpose of the interview is to enable the interviewer to intelligently place a competent staff member in a desirable situation at camp.

Becoming a skilled interviewer takes training, preparation and skill. Constantly be aware of your own technique, assess and correct your methods, endeavour to increase your understanding of human behaviour and your skill as an interviewer should improve.

The first step is to help the applicant relax. One camp uses a pre-interview technique in which the applicants are met by a skilled person prior to the interview, who attempts to remove apprehensions, tells them what to expect in the actual interview, reassures them about the person who will be interviewing them and generally enables them to relax. The interview should take place in comfortable surroundings in a private place in which the interview may proceed uninterrupted.

The interviewer must decide if the applicant possesses camping skills, the ability to work with children, and if the applicant has the necessary formal training and qualification for the particular job. Does the interviewer feel the applicant will fit harmoniously into the staff milieu?

It is not easy to hire a competent, versatile, skilled and mature staff and it can become an exhausting process if several consecutive interviews are scheduled. Some camp directors find group interviews satisfactory, since such characteristics as social poise, ability to participate in discussion, and reactions to the group process may be observed. Large agencies often use an interview form, as shown. These large organizations have several persons doing the interviewing and some standardization is necessary.

Using a structured interview form allows consistent questioning of many applicants, especially when spread over a period of months; it eliminates the possibility of neglecting to ask something crucial; can relax the interviewee; and still allows for random pursuit of certain topics (see sample below of the METROPOLITAN TORONTO YMCA).

Introductions

- a) Name, your job title and responsibilities (brief)
- b) Explain counsellor position, general camp information
- c) Explain structured interview process (why you are taking notes and to save questions to the end).

Knockout Factor

- a) Training Week: Monday, June 27 - Thursday, June 30
- b) Camp Dates: Monday, July 4 - Friday, Sept. 2, including August holiday Monday
- c) Each 2 week session: One overnight and one evening staff meeting; otherwise, regular times Monday to Friday.
- d) Pay Scale: their offered salary will be ...

School Experience

- a) What activities are you involved in at school?
- b) Have you co-ordinated any activities for a group of people?
- c) Have you done any public speaking? How does it make you feel?

Related Experience to Camp

- a) **Camp**
 - what camps have you been to as a camper/staff?
 - what are your camping strengths? weaknesses?
 - what would you consider important in planning your group's daily program?
 - what activities would you plan?
 - your skills in crafts? overnights? swimming? games? campcraft? nature? other?
- b) **Staff**
 - have you been involved in any staff training before? Comments.
 - have you encountered staff conflict? How was it dealt with?
 - how would you work with a junior counsellor? What do you see as important?
 - past experience with; and feeling about; evaluations. Explain our system.
 - what would you like your supervisor's role to be this summer?
- c) **Safety**
 - have you ever handled an injury or first aid situation? How?
 - explain necessity of taking First Aid course if they don't have certificate.
- d) **General Situations**
 - what would you do with a homesick child?
 - ... a child throwing a temper tantrum?
 - ... two quiet, shy children in an otherwise rowdy group?
 - ... two campers who constantly fight?
 - ... a camper who runs away from the group?
 - ... a child who constantly clings to you?

Personal

- a) Do you have a high, low or medium level of patience?
- b) How do you feel about accepting advice, criticism or praise from your supervisor?
- c) Would you be comfortable with camp regulations such as the compulsory wearing of Y T-shirts, no smoking, etc.?
- d) What do you want to get out of camp this summer?
- e) What three things will your campers get out of camp?

Close

- a) Questions and closing information.

The interviewer should record on a post-interview sheet impressions of the applicant, notations of special characteristics or skills the applicant may possess, and details of any commitments made during the interview.

THE CONTRACT

A written and signed contract is the confirmation of the agreement between the staff member and the organization. It should be presented to the applicant immediately after the decision to retain his services is reached. Two copies of the form should be made up. Both should be signed by the applicant and returned to the director who will then sign them and send one off to the applicant. This is also an appropriate time to have other forms, such as the TDI Exemption Form, signed and returned by the applicant.

Some contracts are very short and precise, while others go into a great deal of explanation. Both have their advantages and disadvantages; however, no matter which type of contract, the following information should be included:

- name of the applicant
- position
- duration of employment
- salary and explanation of vacation pay
- responsibilities that the applicant will assume
- responsibilities that the camp will assume
- signature of the applicant
- signature of the director.

STAFF TRAINING

This selection process is important, and if followed through to its conclusion, will provide the camp with a group of individuals who have the necessary qualities to become good staff members. However, they must be able to work together as a unit to achieve the aims and objectives as outlined by the director. They must know and understand the behaviour patterns of young children. They must be aware of the methods of motivating and making each experience meaningful and enjoyable for the campers. These skills are developed through training and experience.

The camp director has an obligation to his staff and to his campers to see to it that the training program is an on-going process from the time of hiring, to pre-camp and during the camping season. It should be followed by an evaluation and discussion in order to improve the techniques for the next summer. Even the most experienced members of the staff, including the director, can learn new ideas and reinforce old ones.

The training program must be well planned and will necessarily differ from camp to camp. Included in this segment of Book II are many training ideas used successfully in established day camps.

STAFF MANUAL

Not all camps present their staff with a fully prepared staff manual. However, most do provide individual articles of interest, programming ideas, forms and other pertinent information to their staff. Whether in manual form or not, there is a value in providing reference material for the use of staff. Often the distributed material covers information about the following topics, and these may be put together to form a manual:

- history of camp
- philosophy
- aims and objectives
- organizational chart
- rules and regulations
- materials available at camp
- forms of training, pre-camp, in camp
- table of contents
- map of campsite
- desirable counsellor characteristics
- current camp calendar
- typical camp day schedule
- tips on talking to parents
- C.I.T. Program
- song leading
- bus procedures and programming
- samples of forms they may be required to use
- transportation for staff and campers
- emergency procedures
- information being distributed to parents
- parents' nights
- programming
 - the process
 - essentials of good programming
 - special programs
 - rainy days
- specialty programs
- evaluations
- characteristics of different age groups
- articles of interest
- list of reference books and where may be found.

PRIOR TO CAMP TRAINING

Job Orientation

The purposes of job orientation are:

- to provide the staff member with relevant information about the camp, its community, its constituents
- to help the staff member understand the nature of the job and its function in relation to other staff members
- to establish the basic patterns of supervisory relationships
- to help the staff member become established in the camp and to aid him in developing a sense of ease and security with the rest of the staff
- to provide the camp director with additional insights about staff members.

For most day camps, pre-camp training events provide the major opportunities for job orientation. However, many camps do have meetings at the office or camp site to which applicants and returning staff are invited to ask and answer questions, to see slides or movies of preceding summers and to go over material provided concerning the camp, its philosophy and its regulations.

Meetings

There are usually a minimum of two or more meetings held a few months prior to the opening of camp for administrative staff of the camp, the director, program director, specialists and section heads. Many of the following topics pertaining to preparation for the coming summer are discussed and decisions made.

- revision of manual and forms
- an outline of the specialty programs
- general camp organization
- mass or special programs -- including rainy days
- reference books -- their availability
- pre-camp format
- responsibilities during pre-camp
- check program equipment
- check existing inventory
- make new purchases.

Correspondence

The staff at a day camp are primarily of high school or university age making meeting times very limited. To overcome this handicap to some extent, the experienced director keeps staff informed by letter and regularly published bulletins which include:

- names of returning staff
- plans for the coming summer and how they are progressing
- pre-camp organization
- reference materials
- program ideas.

OCA Resources

For information concerning counsellor and administrative sessions, contact the Ontario Camping Association office regarding its annual conferences.

From time to time, the Ontario Camping Association sponsors, through its members, various workshops, some of which may pertain to day camping.

Workshops

Many camps offer their staff an opportunity to meet together at various times during the year, holidays, or weekends to discuss and work at specific areas of camp life included in the day camp program. These sessions may be conducted by the director himself, returning staff or guest specialists.

Pre-Camp Training Methods and Topics

The essential first step in developing a training program is to determine the objectives for training. Training objectives are set both by the camp and the staff by means of a process of collaboration and negotiation. The objectives are more likely to be realistic when the staff are involved in assessing their own training needs, or at least can accept the objectives as having significance for them.

Each camp may, because of its own unique situation, include topics at its pre-camp sessions that are only relevant to its operation; however, below is a list of topics that have been included in many of the sessions held for private, agency, and municipal day camps.

Topics

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| - Philosophy | - Swim program |
| - Staff meetings | - Games-quiet-active 'New' or co-operative |
| - Parent contact | - Rest/quiet period |
| - Behavioural problems | - Storytelling |
| - Discipline | - Rainy days |
| - Transportation | - Overnight/overdays |
| - Forms | - Out-trips |
| - Reports | - Music |
| - Lost and found | - Singsongs |
| - Reference materials | - Archery |
| - Staff recreation | |

- Program planning
- Food/cooking
- Typical day
- Special events
- CIT program
- First day program
- Specialties
- Emergency procedures
- First Aid
- Age characteristics of children
- Camp rules and regulations
- Additional site rules where applicable (i.e. Conservation Area Rules)
- Drama
- Campcraft
- Canoeing
- Nature lore
- Nature craft
- Water skiing
- Sailing
- Horseback riding
- Arts and crafts
- Multiculturalism
- Family situations
- Orientation to facility

EXAMPLES OF STAFF TRAINING

Case Study #1

Agency Day Camp

Counsellor Training in YMCA

In general training sessions, we attempt to make the best of our resources covering the following topics:

- YWCA philosophy of day camping
- first aid
- swimming supervision and games
- role of counsellor
- group development
- theory of ages and stages
- undertaking the needs of children
- behaviour problems
- program planning
- skills -- campcraft, nature lore, games, dramatics
- cookouts
- overnights
- supervision.

In the specific training area, the individual camp director determines the content of her training. She is concerned with the site and the community in which her campers live. She will look after such topics as:

- the community
- specific needs of her campers
- development of program
- transportation
- swimming facilities
- camp procedures -- rules, schedules, etc.
- record writing
- supervision
- rainy days
- staff members.

In monthly meetings, which are held from September to May, the day camp directors receive training in the set-up of day camp. Once they have hired all their staff, they review the qualifications of each member, and begin to plan the type of general training they will have.

The chief concern of all directors is to develop a staff team. Dividing training and sharing resources makes this difficult.

Case Study #2 Private Day Camp

The following chart is included to graphically display the organization of a pre-camp week.

PRE-CAMP TRAINING AND ORIENTATION — CAMP "A"

| TIME | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY |
|------|-----------------------------------|--|--|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 9 | Arrive - Assign Accommodation | Swim | C.I.T.s Arrive Meet Counsellor | Rainy or Hot Day Program | "Special Days" Programs |
| 10 | Trust Games Co-operative Games | Canoes | "Get Acquainted" Games | Microcomputers | "New" Games |
| 11 | Teaching Methods | Hike with Brown Bag Lunch | Camp Policies and Rules | Fitness Program - Awards | Campcraft |
| 12 | L | U | N | C | H |
| 1 | Acclimatization | Archery Clinic | Archery Clinic | Indian Lore | Evaluation |
| 2 | Canoe Skills | First Aid | Canoe Skills | Indian Lore | Closing Remarks |
| 3 | Swim Clinic | First Aid | Swim Clinic | Nature | All Leave For Home |
| 4 | Games Sharing Session | First Aid | Emergency Procedure - Pool | Canoe | |
| 5 | Plan Campfire Program | Reports Ideas From Counsellors' Conference | - Pond - Fire - Lost Child - Injuries | Swim | |
| 6 | D | I | NN | ER | |
| 7 | Campcraft | Camper Needs | Program Planning | Bus Procedure & Program Planning | |
| 8 | Program Planning | Leadership | | | |
| 9 | | Case Studies | Camp Fire Program (Song, Skits) | Camp Fire Program (Song, Skits) | |

IN-CAMP TRAINING Staff meetings are a necessity of any camp. They allow:

Staff Meetings

- discussion of common problems
- organization of special programs
- programming for a specific period (1 day, 1 week)
- passing on of information from the administration
- socializing.

The social aspect of these meetings should not be underestimated. As the staff members get to know each other, they tend to relax and become more communicative. Consequently, they work well together, creating the cohesive unit so evident in the successful camp.

Only a few day camps are located in the centre of an area they are serving, thus the staff must share the transportation with the campers, often making camp meetings difficult.

Most camp directors recognize the necessity for holding regular meetings (at least one per week) and have hurdled the obstacle in various ways:

- hold regular evening meetings at an accessible location
- let each section arrange its own meeting times
- have one overnight per period per section and have the meeting at that time

- meet during swim periods
- have the specialist cover the groups while the sections meet
- have a sufficient number of staff leave on each bus; detain the rest for section meetings; have one bus return with the staff who accompanied the children home in time for a camp wide meeting; have the returning bus take the entire staff to central locations in the city (supper is usually provided at these meetings).

From the aforementioned, it is evident that not all camps have an opportunity to meet together en masse. However, successful directors will be quick to point out that they must have time to meet all the staff in a group situation. It is at this time that the director can offer praise and reinforcement to maintain the cohesiveness which has already been pointed to as a definite asset. This last factor should be taken into consideration when a director decides on meeting format.

Individual Discussions

The camp director and the section heads should include as one of their tasks the direct and indirect observation of each staff member. A meeting of the observer and the staff member should take place informally at a convenient time for the purpose of discussing problems and exchanging information. This is not a time to evaluate or appraise the individual, but rather a time when the two begin to know and understand each other, so that working conditions may improve.

Internal Movement of Staff

Every camp has a number of individuals who have exceptional camping abilities which should be shared with the rest of the staff. Instead of having this individual perform for the rest of the staff, it is sometimes possible to rotate that staff member to another section to demonstrate the skill to staff and campers alike in a real setting.

Demonstrations

The staff often becomes bored when the same individuals are constantly called on to pass on information. To avoid this problem and add some life to presentations, different groups, sections or specialty staff are approached to prepare and demonstrate a certain aspect of camp life for the entire staff.

Use of Reference Materials

Every camp should have a growing reference library from which staff and trainees are encouraged to borrow frequently. The library could contain:

- purchased books
- borrowed books (from public libraries)
- programs used previously in your own camp
- information presented at training sessions over the years
- camping publications (the Canadian and American Camping Associations publish quarterly magazines)
- camp manuals
- government publications (often available at no cost, ranging from weather charts and ecology games to leadership and staff motivation).

COUNSELLOR-IN-TRAINING PROGRAM

While each camp offering a CIT program will have its own approach, the 'CIT Manual', compiled by the Canadian Camping Association, may prove to be valuable. The CIT program is not established to have extra personnel on hand, but rather as a leadership program geared to the younger teenager, too old to be a camper and too young to be a staff member.

Many successful camps operate their programs with the following aims and objectives in mind:

- to acquaint the CIT with characteristic behaviour patterns of camp age children
- to acquaint the CIT with program ideas and to demonstrate the proper techniques in research of new ideas

- to prepare the CIT to present new projects, games, songs, and skits, to camp age children
- to prepare the CIT to cope with various discipline problems which may arise in the camp situation
- to introduce the CIT to work in all the specialty areas of camp
- to prepare the CIT to work effectively with other people in the most effective way within the camp program.

A number of methods used in successful programs are briefly outlined:

- assign short and long term projects to the CIT's
- have open discussions about experiences and problems that arose during a practical phase. Try to get the group to decide how they would have handled each problem.
- establish workshops in different aspects of camp life
- have the members of the group prepare demonstrations of a specific aspect of camp life to illustrate realistically what is happening
- have the CIT keep a notebook up-to-date on such topics as:
 - . ways to motivate
 - . low organizational games
 - . songs
 - . program ideas
- bring visitors to the campsite to work with or talk to the CIT's
- have a large number of reference books available
- have the camp specialists meet with the group to outline and discuss their program
- have each CIT keep a day-to-day permanent personal keepsake during their time at camp. Lecture notes, artwork, poetry, quotations, handouts, etc., can fill these pages and provide a permanent and useful keepsake of their CIT days.

A counsellor-in-training is not an assistant counsellor when placed with a group. The CIT is there to observe, evaluate and be evaluated in order to improve. With proper supervision the CIT will, given time, be an excellent asset to your camp program.

SUPERVISION

The purpose of supervision is to determine if the camp program is in agreement with the philosophy of the camp. To ensure this, the staff must fully understand all aspects of the camp philosophy. If staff members are not aware of what is required of them, they can hardly be expected to carry out their duties to the satisfaction of the director. The counsellor's program is an important area to be supervised. This can be accomplished in several ways.

Consultation, Discussion and Evaluation

Communication between the staff and directors is of utmost importance. This can be done during staff meetings in which both parties make an honest effort to improve the program through discussion and evaluation.

Personal Help

Perhaps more can be accomplished on an individual basis if the counsellor comes to the director voluntarily. For this to occur, it is important that the staff feel that the director and senior staff are accessible and genuinely interested.

Indirect Observation

A very accurate picture of how a counsellor is handling his/her campers and the degree to which a suitable program is being carried out is determined by observing campers:

- are they enjoying themselves?
- are they wandering around unattended?
- are they engaging in an interesting activity?
- are they attentive?
- are they capable of executing simple instructions?

Direct Observation

A section head or the director may be scheduled to participate in a portion of the camp day with each counsellor and the group, once each session. If the counsellors are aware of this schedule before camp begins, the process will be non-threatening. Such interaction will also further encourage the development of staff unity and open communication between senior staff and counsellors. An opportunity will then be provided for the supervisor to exchange constructive suggestions and give positive reinforcement to the counsellor.

EVALUATION

Purpose

Camping has many benefits to offer staff as well as campers. Constant stock taking of experiences and evaluation of the leadership role in the camp setting will allow a staff member to reap these benefits and allow the campers to take full advantage of their time at camp.

Self-evaluation, although very useful, is limited in value for people do not see themselves as others do; thus, a system of evaluation of appraisal should be developed by a supervisor in conjunction with the counselling staff. The purpose of the system would be:

- to stimulate the staff member to develop a better understanding of "self"
- to provide the camp administration with a clear picture of the staff member in order to make appropriate assignments of responsibilities in the future
- as a source of information for references to schools and future employers at the request of the staff member.

The Process

All appraisals should be written either anecdotally or on a prepared form and delivered orally. The staff member should be given an opportunity to reply orally and if desired, in writing. The evaluation process is one in which the staff member and supervisor participate informally, confidentially and objectively. It should be entered into by the staff member in a spirit of "How am I doing my job as others see it, and how can I improve on it?" The supervisor, director or section head, should undertake the evaluation in the spirit of "What are the main strengths and weaknesses of this staff member in respect to the job, and what can I say to help the staff member to improve, in a way that can be accepted?" Both parties must strive for frankness and objectivity. The supervisor must also realize that this is a human process and that praise must be expressed where it is due.

When and Where

In many established camps, there are two or three evaluation periods during the summer, so that the individual being appraised may have a chance to act on the criticisms and to hear of the degree of success. All evaluation forms are then filed to be used as reference. The place where the evaluation dialogue is held will vary from individual to individual. Some people wish to be away from the centre of camp, on a walk or in a canoe, while others prefer the confines of an office. However, they all agree that it should take place in private where there will be no interruptions.

It is most important that the evaluation process being used at your camp is explained to, and discussed with, all staff members prior to the summer. Staff will thus have a clear understanding of both their job responsibilities and the way in which their performance will be evaluated.

Forms

There are three types of forms on which an individual may be appraised:

- on a sheet of paper having only the name and position of the staff member. The supervisor fills in the rest
- an anecdotal form with headings as a guideline to writing the report. For example:
 - reaction of campers
 - cooperation
 - responsibility
 - participation in camp programs, etc.

- prepared form on which the supervisor checks off the qualities of the individual that have been observed.

SAMPLE FORM

DAY CAMP STAFF EVALUATION FORM

Name: _____ Date: _____
Position: _____ Director: _____

Rating System: 1 Outstanding; 2 Above Average; 3 Satisfactory
4 Needs Improvement; 5 Poor.

Job Responsibility

- a) attendance completed correctly and on time _____
- b) camper calls completed before each session _____
- c) has complied with staff uniform regulation _____
- d) completed and followed program forms _____
- e) incident forms completed when required _____
- f) attended all staff training events _____
- g) effective use of forms _____
- h) camper letters completed on time with appropriate content _____

Camper Responsibility

- a) expressed genuine interest in campers _____
- b) showed awareness of age characteristics and needs _____
- c) ability to deal with 'difficult' campers (discipline) _____
- d) use of unique and creative program ideas _____
- e) effective utilization of camp equipment _____

General Areas

- a) participated in Arts and Crafts program _____
- b) participated in Waterfront program _____
- c) participated in Overnight programs _____
- d) used Senior Staff persons as resource people _____
- e) was co-operative with senior staff _____
- f) was co-operative with peer counsellors _____
- g) accepted constructive criticism _____
- h) worked well with junior staff _____
- i) maintained an enthusiastic and supportive attitude _____

Recommendations For Future Employment

- ___ Do not rehire for next year's staff
- ___ Consider rehiring for next year
- ___ Definitely seek to rehire for next year

General Comments: This may be in anecdotal form or 'open ended'; or may be a copy of a letter to the staff member.

Signed: Camp Director _____
Staff Member _____

The importance of the camp staff cannot be over-emphasized. A good staff is not simply hired, but is developed through the efforts of the director and the effectiveness of the training system. An effective method of evaluation is essential to complete the process of staffing and operating your day camp.

DISMISSAL

Dismissal is usually deemed to be a negative process and seldom do we pay adequate attention to it. Of course, we do find people who have no intention of living up to the expectations set for them by the camp. However, most often we find we must dismiss staff members because they do not have the skills, ability or personality traits we anticipated they might have when they were hired.

Quite often someone who we initially see as incompetent or incapable can be taught to be an excellent leader and counsellor if we are prepared to make an effort. This means that we must establish as a primary objective of our camp, the development and personal growth of the staff.

The supervision and evaluation procedures discussed previously in this manual are the best tools to use to assist the camp and the staff to determine if there is a possibility for change. No matter how we view the abilities of a staff member, we should attempt to honestly outline our specific concerns. Then we must give that staff member the opportunity to consider the information and use it effectively.

Steps to Dismissal

1. Supervisors should record observations of all staff.
2. Observations should be thoroughly discussed with each staff member through an evaluation procedure.
3. Allow staff members an opportunity to implement the information.
4. Supervisors should continue to record observations.
5. If change is not forthcoming, the director should play an active role in the process and repeat steps #2 and #3 OR come to an agreement with the staff member to sever the relationship.
6. When dismissing a staff member, for the sake of the campers, other staff members and the staff member in question, choose a private place. It should be out of the range of others. Establish the reasons for dismissal and attempt to have the staff member concur. Then explain how you will handle payments to date; and at that point, as quickly as possible, have the staff member driven home or to the nearest point of transportation. Of course, if the dismissal can be done at the completion of the camp day, the director can avoid the above and spend whatever time is required.
7. It is not incumbent upon the director to notify the parents of the staff member, but for younger staff members it may be a worthwhile gesture to assist that individual member.
8. Immediately thereafter, the director should document the situation and have the supervisor do the same.

A staff change will always have an effect on campers, parents and other staff members. The director should be aware of this and provide an explanation as soon as possible. Of course, the reasons for the break in relations are confidential; however, as is the case most often, if the separation was discussed and mutually agreed upon, then that may be stated by the director. Parents whose children are affected should also be notified of the changes that will occur. As well, a personal contact by the director and/or the supervisor may be necessary with the campers to dispel their uncertainty and insecurities.

Even dismissal, a negative aspect of camp, can have its positive benefits to all concerned.

STAFF RETENTION

For years, camp directors have pondered the question "How do we keep the good ones?" There is no one method to keep staff returning. There are several things one does throughout the camping relationship that encourage people to return.

A camp's operational philosophy is probably the most significant aspect in one's decision to return. Is the director consistent, caring and involved in the day-to-day operation? Is the director visible and is what is preached practiced?

Does the camp provide a good learning experience for the staff? Is the evaluation process one that provides for personal growth?

Are all lines of communication open between supervisory people and the counselling and specialty staff? Is this communication frank yet nurturing?

Social activities are important in the life of a day camp. Are there

sufficient opportunities after camp hours for the staff to get together to relax and enjoy each others company?

If the answers to these questions are yes, then retaining staff will be relatively easy. Not only will retention be good, but recruitment will be gratifying, as present staff members will promote the camp to their friends.

Below is an example of the policies of one camp to assure retention of staff.

The Retention of Day Camp Staff

- Establish a desire on the part of the counsellor to become a member of the camp staff. We have a viable counsellor Training program from the ranks of which we select the most promising counsellors. Many of our campers plan their young lives with a view to entering the CIT program.
- Each year, our effort to retain staff starts at the initial interview by involving the prospective staff member in planning, asking for program ideas, or changes they would like to see for the good of the camp. We then do our best to implement the suggestions offered by the staff.
- Experienced staff help run sessions during pre-camp training. It is our intention to make them feel responsibility and to help them realize their importance to the camp.
- There is within the camp hierarchy, an opportunity to grow in ability and responsibility. There have been several instances in which campers have become CITs, then counsellor, head of swimming, program director, and then director.
- The staff party committee is responsible for the planning of staff parties at camp and off camp.
- We think that staff members respond favourably when we exhibit sound business practices; e.g. job descriptions, written contracts, a salary schedule, and a budget.
- Communicate your appreciation of a job well done; by the spoken word, by your countenance, and by thank you notes and letters.
- Establish a staff uniform or staff shirt. Dress up on Parent's Night and other special occasions.
- Have a staff reunion at which some effort is made to encourage nostalgia, about their experiences at camp. Plan to involve staff members in the reunion: e.g. planning, preparing the food, leading games, etc. Show pictures, slides, movies, mementoes, memorabilia.
- Perhaps an off-season get together at a home, or at a suitable restaurant will keep staff spirit healthy.
- Try to involve your staff members in O.C.A. Our staff has been involved in giving and attending sessions; on writing committees; as camp visitors; and as members of various other committees, and displays. We all learn from our involvements.
- Send newsletters, birthday cards, Christmas cards or Hanukkah greetings.
- Some staff members may welcome employment beyond the actual camp session. They may be involved in opening, closing, helping in off-season operations, or secretarial work.

All of the above ideas have been helpful to us in retaining a sound, experienced staff over the past quarter century.

FURTHER READING Available from Canadian Camping Association
Suite 2, 1806 Avenue Road, Toronto, Ontario, M5M 3Z1
Telephone: (416) 781-4717

**Camp Counsellor
and Program
Specialist
Training Series**

Edited by Dennis A. Vinton and Elizabeth M. Farley

The camp counsellor and program specialist program has been written to provide basic skills, knowledge, and behaviours needed for working in a camp. The training program is oriented to field application and features individualization of learning experiences. Each of the modules contains a checklist of performance objectives, a pretest, learning activities, post-test, and answer sheets for the tests. The objectives, learning activities, and evaluation methods focus on the specific duties which the camp counsellor or program specialist does on the job. Although the program can be used in a variety of ways -- as a college course, institute, or workshop, or as pre-camp training -- the emphasis is always on the practical application of learning in a camp setting. The booklets are bound, 8-1/2 x 11, three-hole punched.

1. (An) Orientation to Camping and the Camp, 119 p.
2. Knowing the Campers, 142 p.
3. Camp Program Planning and Leadership, 142 p.
4. Camp Health and Safety Practices, 87 p.
5. Dealing with Camper Behaviour, 131 p.
6. Evaluating the Camp Experience, 145 p.

Modules 2 and 4 deal more heavily with the handicapped camper; the other modules deal with generic skills common to staff working with any other camper clientele.

Project REACH, 1979.

**(A) Camp
Director Trains
His Own Staff**

Catherine T. Hammett

Suggestions for pre-camp and in-camp training. Excellent and definitive information will be found most useful by camp directors.

American Camping Association, 32 p.

**Counsellor-In-
Training
Instructor's Manual**

Designed for use by the C.I.T. Director with special tips for presentation of each chapter and suggestions for exercise answers. Additional references for each chapter topic. Price includes Binder, Manual and Instructor Notes.

Canadian Camping Association, 123 p., 1983.

**Counsellor-In-
Training Manual**

This workbook is designed for individual use by the C.I.T.'s. Also in a looseleaf format. Camp information can be easily added.

Camp History & Philosophy; Camp Facilities, Policies and Procedures; The Role of the C.I.T.; Health and Safety at Camp; The World of the Camper; Communication; The Effective Teacher; Leadership; Program Organization; Public Relations; Evaluation.

Canadian Camping Association, 91 p., 1983.

**Guide for
Training Camp
Staff**

Project STAFF

A model of staff training designed for 16-21 year old youth from low-income settings, but may be adapted to any camp staff training.

American Camping Association, 32 p., 1981.

**Lead On ...
Counsellor**

Jack Pearse, John Jorgenson, Jane McCutcheon, Pat Pearse

A timely and effective book by four uniquely qualified camp staff providing excellent information for the camp counsellor or for those who train camp counsellors. A practical, delightfully written book filled with innovative ideas for camp leaders.

Camp Tawingo Publications, 272 p., 1982.

Camp Counselling

Mitchell, Viola A., et al. 6th ed. 1983

An excellent book on the subject of camp counselling.

Illus. 575 p.

Case for
Training Camp

Project 87 001

A report of staff training during the 1-12 year old group
sessions, but not as related to the staff training.

Project 87 001

The 1-12 year old group was trained during the 1-12 year old group

A staff of 12 was trained during the 1-12 year old group
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Project 87 001

The 1-12 year old group was trained during the 1-12 year old group

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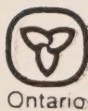
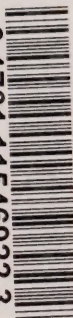
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ISBN 0-7743-9132-4